

Tess Morey

Bodmin Landscape Project 1999

Monday 31 May

The day started with a forty- five minute walk across Bodmin Moor. The walk provides an ideal approach to the site on Leskernick Hill, as you get a feeling for the landscape in which the inhabitants of the settlement once lived. Underfoot, the soft, tufty grass squelches with trapped water, and several small channels of water have to be crossed. A gently sloping hill also has to be crossed. Once over this, Leskernick comes into view. Behind it, the skyline is dominated by Brown Willy to the left, and the smooth topped , mist covered hills all around.

From a distance, the settlement on Leskernick cannot be distinguished from what appear to be a mass of naturally occurring stones. But when moving around the site, the walls of houses can be identified as well as a stone row. Two stone circles can be determined, although it is debatable whether the circle closest to the site is naturally occurring. The site is divided into two settlements, known as south and west, and it is not possible, as yet, to determine whether they were inhabited at the same time by the same people, or whether one was inhabited later than the other.

One of the stone circles is located immediately below the southern site , and the other is halfway up the opposite hill. It is debatable whether the stone circle closest to the southern site was culturally formed , as there appear to be stones visible just above the surface of the ground which are not in the circle. It was also suggested by geomorphologists that the long, flattish stone at the centre of the circle could have arrived at that position naturally . The stone row is located between the two circles, and crosses a leat, which runs away from the site. If you walk along the stone row, you realise that as you move over the slight hill on which it is situated, you are facing in the direction of Rough Tor. It has been suggested that this orientation was deliberate for ritual purposes.

Excavations on the site are taking place in the southern settlement, between two houses, one of which (hut 39) was excavated last year, and in a house on the western settlement. The trench outside hut 39 is hoped to reveal features that one might expect to find outside a domestic building, such as postholes for fences and drainage ditches. The trench in house 1 in the western settlement is hoped to reveal features expected of the inside of a domestic building, such as postholes for supports and some sort of flooring.

Although I arrived on Saturday, today is the first full day that we have spent working on the site. I was in trench 1 , where the shape of the trench was marked out by means of string and nails. One bit of the trench is cake shaped, which is, I'm told, not typical. The day was spent removing turf with a spade and trowel. I've not used a spade before, and although it's a pretty basic tool, it got the better of me. The trowel method was preferable, though tedious. The vast amount of stones within the soil made it very tiring (and tiresome) work.

However, as the majority of us were working in this trench, there was no shortage of people to talk to, and I had fun conversations with those working next to me. The enthusiasm and good humoured nature of absolutely everyone gave the trench a very jolly and pleasant atmosphere. Well structured tea breaks made the day pass very quickly. The weather was overcast, but there was no rain, which was ideal.

Now back in the caravan , which I'm sharing with Tanya and Becky , I have realised how tired I am, and I am grateful for home comforts like the TV, kettle and chocolate. I think I will sleep well tonight.

Tuesday 1 June

Today the biggest topic of conversation was the weather - it was very warm. Becky is burnt to a sinder, and I'm not much better myself. Whilst working in the trench, (house 1), my lower back was exposed, as people kept reminding me, so it is now quite red. Never mind. Anyway, we exposed what is thought to be the bottom of the house , and found a complex arrangement of stones which may be the doorway, although it is difficult to interpret. I was happy to find that Mike (site manager and trench 1 supervisor) and Sue, are very honest about their interpretations of features, and can admit that they can't be sure about what something might be. It makes their interpretations more acceptable than if they had claimed that they knew for certain what something was.

Crashing on. I'm really tired (again). Bedtime.

Wednesday 2 June

Okay, so today was wet. Very wet. My walking boots are saturated and so are the many other layers that I wore today. But its not really a complaint, as rain has never bothered me and I refuse to turn into one of those people (like my Gran) who a) moan constantly about the weather - if its a tiny bit sunny its way too hot and if its raining its the end of the world, b) let the weather dictate their life and c) talk only about the weather. Thankfully, everyone still managed to be very cheery and fun despite their increasing dampness, and I didn't hear one complaint, only jokey remarks.

As it has been said by various people, it is good to experience the site in all weather conditions, as you learn to move around the site by recognising features that become prominent. This morning it was foggy and you couldn't see 200 yards in front of your face, which meant that stones that were becoming familiar to me disappeared. We also went wrong getting to the site, as the features on the distant horizon that are used as navigation aids, like Brown Willy and Leskenick itself, were not visible at all. It seemed like we walked for miles longer than usual, but somehow we ended up at the usual place where we crossed the stream. I wouldn't have done that little journey by myself though.

This evening we went to the opening of the exhibition at Altarnun village hall, organised by the anthropologists. Becky and I chatted to Andrew (Poole) , Gareth, Ranjan and Katya. We had a great laugh. Mostly we were laughing about a programme we all seemed to have watched last night about College societies in America. Gareth and Andrew decided that they were going to start a club to which we could become members if we made it passed the "cuts" . It was decided that the first "cut" would be held tomorrow evening in Andrew's caravan.

Thursday 3 June

Got soaked again. I went prepared with plastic bags in my walking boots though, which could have been good, but wasn't. I had wet feet within an hour or so. By early afternoon, the trenches were filled with water which made trowelling in between the stones impossible, as the earth became mud and just smeared around. We left site early as the conditions really were impossible. Although I am glad for this now, as I'm sitting here warm and dry, it is a shame as it will delay the progress of the excavation. I'm knackered.

Friday 4 June

I don't think I've ever been so grateful for a day off. It was nice to break the trowelling/getting wet and cold routine today. Gareth, Andrew, Katya and I went to Padstow which was great fun. I was delighted to discover that Cornwall does actually have some nice scenery to offer. (I have not got this impression before when I've been here). We walked from Padstow along a little lane that goes above the town towards Crogmere beach. As we approached the beach from this direction there was a beautiful view over the fields of long grass and the long sweep of white sand and cliffs. The beach was deserted, which added to its appeal. I enjoyed the others company, as we all like to laugh a lot, which we did. Even when it did actually rain when we were on the beach and as far as we could have been from shelter, we laughed about it.

We ventured into to Bodmin on the way back to Camelford in the hope of finding wellies. Shoefayre provided us with four pairs just before closing (probably the most costum they had had all day). Katya and I wanted the pink Barbie Doll ones, but they didn't come in our size. Boohoo. We then had the longest shipping trip ever in Safeway, owing to the fact that we lost Gareth somewhere in there, who, as it turned out wasn't even half done by the time the rest of us had finished. But as he explained when I went back in to search him out, it wasn't actually his fault, as Ranjan, who was ill with flu, had given him a huge shopping list. It included paracetamol, which Gareth had never heard of before and had no idea what they were or where to find them, and curry sauce, which neither of us had a clue would look like or where to find it. But I must say, I am disappointed to learn that Ranjan uses a ready made sauce for his curry.

Saturday 5 June

Seems bizarre to work on a Saturday, even though I have been working on Saturdays for the last eight months. But there is a slight contrast between standing in a dress shop for nine hours where the mentality is image is everything, and squatting on a muddy hill for eight hours looking like shit. I thought to myself today that its funny, but I enjoy both worlds equally, but I would not want to exist in one if I could not spend any time in the other, if that makes sense.

The work today involved looking for the land surface in house one. Working on the bits that were above the water, we took layers off an area at the top of the house to reach the living layer. The water made it difficult, as I couldn't tell exactly how much I was taking off, or see the colour changes between the layers. It made me rely much more on the feel of the soil - how the textures differed. A learning process indeed.

Sunday 6 June

Today we extended trench A in house 1 to the middle of the outer wall. We removed the turf and any soil with a trowel. The weather conditions were dry, and sometimes sunny, which was suitable for a photo. I helped with this by sponging the water up from the cake shaped trench, and placing the scale in the photo. The ranging pole had to be placed approximately five inches away from the balk, with the pointed end facing towards the camera, and the other end slightly closer to the balk. Dirty areas at the end of the scale had to be hidden by the grass. The notes that were taken with each picture were; the camera type, the film number, description of the area, and the direction the camera was facing. The photo process involved four people; one holding the ladder, one taking notes, one doing the scales and the photographer. So, I will know for next time.

I trowelled in house 1 again, removing the turfy layer, not specifically looking for the living floor. Most of what I trowelled seemed to be the soft, squidgy material that had washed down from higher up. I then cleaned in between the stones towards the back of the house, which was still the turfy stuff. Here I made my first, and possibly my only, find. A flint. I noticed it because of its very pale colour which stood out against the grey of the surrounding granite. Mike said that it was the flake of a beach pebble, and because I found it lying vertically, it may have been dropped accidentally.

This gave me the chance to learn how to record finds. I placed the flint in a clear plastic bag onto which I wrote LSW99A (site, year, trench number) and '4' in a triangle, which is the small find number. I then recorded these details onto a sheet, as well as description of the find. The spot where I found it was marked with a nail and tag, marked '4', so the planner can see it when drawing.

At the end of the day it began to rain, so I went back wet again.

Monday 7 June

I was in trench B for the first time. Feel like I've spent the whole day working. It was just Andrew and I, plus Richard, supervisor. At one corner of the trench is what is thought to be a cerne. As the digging goes on, found that the orientation of the stones means that it was more likely to be a collapsed wall. We removed the peaty layer to reveal a large stone that lay underneath the pile of stones in the corner. As more and more of the peat came away, the stone became larger and larger. We also found a natural layer in the same corner, which was orangey brown.

Digging in Richard's trench is a very slow process, as he is very precise about where to dig, as it is difficult determining what the sediments are, and when we should remove the stones. Andrew and I were given very small areas to do at a time, most of which Richard did himself, which meant we had to waste time waiting for him to tell us what to do next. But there was relief after lunch when we had a site tour to look at the progress in the other trenches. There have been five finds from the trench by house 39, including flints. There was also feature like a wall across the width of the trench. Gary's trench over the wall made the construction of the wall visible. It seemed that the outer facing stones were carefully selected, due to their regular shape. The stones in the middle of the wall were small, like rubble. Tired.

5

Tuesday 8 June

Back in trench A, and on the same bit all day, as Mike was unsure where the floor level is. I took three or four spits off within a tricky stony, area. This afternoon we had a talk about postholes as it is possible that there is one at the top left hand corner of the house. This location is likely to have been where there would have been a post, when considering the evidence from house 39. The posthole consisted of a small ring (approximately 3 inches in diameter) of small stones. If there is a complete circle of stones, you can be fairly sure that it was a posthole, but if there are a couple missing so the shape is not complete, you cannot be sure. This is why it is important to keep the small stones in the approximate position they were found. After lunch, everyone was trying to get back down to the living surface. The weather surprised us today by only drizzling slightly sometimes. A pleasant change.

Wednesday 9 June

Back in trench B with Richard and Andrew. It was a really hard day and I now feel thoroughly patronised and incapable. We spent the day mattocking down two inches below the natural. As we were told, and understood the first time, we had to work in a hurry, as Richard had to open a trench below the house. We had many lessons on how to use a mattock, which is fair enough because I've never used one before and would like to learn how to do it properly. Apparently it can be a very sensitive tool, and you should use your knees, not your back.

Every bucket that we filled had to be sieved. To do this, you should put in half a bucket at a time, (down wind), and shake the sieve at waist level. Every piece of mud has to be checked in case there is a piece of pottery or charcoal in there. But we had no finds, so it was a slow process. Andrew and I also sieved the loose that the team from trench A produced, as we finished work early before lunch because of photos. After lunch there was a welcome lecture on context sheets. But if I'm honest, I'm afraid that I wasn't listening too hard as it was very hot and I was very tired and achy.

Later on a linear feature turned up across the width of our trench. We moved the stones and were told that we still hadn't mattocked far enough down. By this point I was utterly miserable. I was even more tired than I would have been usually due to period pain, which also made my back and stomach ache, and slowed me down a lot. Being hassled by Richard made me feel even more useless.

Speaking of Richard. Frustration. Ahhhhhhhhhhhhhhh!!!!!!!!!!!!!! At one point, when we had finished mattocking back the first layer, he wanted us to see how far down the next layer was that we should go to. This involved, and I state clearly, using a trowel to dig down to find this layer. Obviously, the result of this was hole. A hole that was made by Richards dictation. When Mike saw the hole he wondered how we had gone so far below the present level. The result being that Andrew and I received a lecture from Mike on how to work back one level at a time. It was a very good lecture and I am grateful for it, but I learnt it at A-level, as its one of the most basic things in practical archaeology. But what can you say when you were just doing what your supervisor told you. Urgh!

6

All day we have been hassled about how fast we must work and what a lot there is to do blah blah blah. Yet, all day, Richard took us aside, at one point halfway up the hill, out of ear shot from everybody else, and explained, in one of his lessons, how to work quickly and effectively. Classic! Either he wants us to sieve properly, the way that he showed us, or he doesn't. If the proper way is not fast enough he should tell us to do it another way. All Andrew and I had done all day was exactly what he had told us to do, as quickly and as best we could. And why wouldn't we? We want the excavation to work as well. Anyway, I'm winding myself up. I'll sleep on it and feel better tomorrow.

Friday 10 June

Nigel's Magical Mystery Tour. Excellent. But too tired to talk about it.

Saturday 11 June

Trench B again! Help me. Thoroughly miserable day being patronised. Apparently, Richard had said to Simon that Andrew was messy and I was lazy. Nice one. I was furious and hurt by this, because in eighteen years of my existence I have not once been told that I am lazy, but always the opposite - work too hard, slow down etc. And now, because I worked more slowly the other day due to a tiny insignificant thing called period PAIN, apparently I'm lazy. Completely reluctant to work today. Richard can bloody well do it himself.

Sunday 12 June

Trench B. Mattocking. Shovelling. CLEANING!!!! New members to Richards team. Poor sods. But they were good company and it was an OK day.

One good thing came of working in Richard's trench - I got to know Andrew. We had a great laugh which saw us through otherwise tedious days. This evening we went to the bar, where he and Andrew (Loader) played air guitar, keyboards and drums to the wailing singer bloke. They stole the show and lapped up the attention. Quite deservedly so to.

Monday 13 June.

Thankyou! A new trench. The kind and completely adorable Chris's trench. Yesterday they found a feature which appears to be ditch. Natural orange can be seen at the bottom and sides. Inside was a fill. When we removed the remainder of this from the sides, the channel was clearly visible. It is approximately 20 cm wide and heads off in a curve across one corner of the trench. In the balk there is a natural angular stone, which the ditch may have been built around. Next to the ditch was also what Chris thought might be a post hole, which I excavated. But it didn't go down very far. Still uncertain.

A nice day. Nice to have a different view. Chris told us to imagine that we were in a great plane and that the horses were gazelle and the cows wilderbeast. Or something. Works for me. My trowel is too big. I used Chris's Professional Amateur trowel instead. A very nice trowel.

Tuesday 14 June

Mattocked, under Chris's superior supervision, to get to get off the top peaty layer in the newly opened trench. That's about it really.

Wednesday 15 June

A nice relaxing day. Trowelled in the morning to get down to the black greasy layer. Then Sharon planned in the afternoon, so we cleaned the old trench ready for the photo.

My new caravan mates seem nice. Louise is another first year who I knew already, but not that well. She's refreshingly open minded. Jane is a very reasonable person, who takes a very calm and un - opinionated view of things. Also very refreshing. Four is a bit of a squash, especially as Tanya is a complete telly addict and has it on first thing in the morning and as soon as we get back. I hate the way television rules peoples lives and kills the social scene which might otherwise exist. But that's just my opinion.

Thursday 17 June

I cleaned the section of Chris's old trench, ready for Cliff to draw, which basically involved removing the dry material to see the layers. We then trowelled down in the new trench to get to the brown rab. A very hot day which resulted in burn on burn. I learnt how to level in the afternoon. Katy helped me a lot, as she was fresh out of Bignor.

In the evening came the moment that we had been waiting for all week - the dinner party in our caravan. Somehow , Tanya and I got roped into it last Friday, when we were sitting in the pub after our day out. I think we were arguing about who made a better lasagne - Tanya or my mum. Pathetic I know, and the result was that Ken asked us to prove it and we rose to the challenge. Still, a great night was had by all. We managed to squeeze sixteen people into our tiny caravan, all of whom got fed. I made this cake thing that didn't quite turn out right, as the dry ingredients needed golden syrup to stick them together, but I couldn't find any. Luckily though, I put it in the refrigerator in the Andrew's caravan, which is also where I cut it, which meant of course that the mess went all over the floor of their caravan, not ours. But it wasn't my fault, I couldn't cut it properly because I was laughing too much. Never mind. Maybe I will get another opportunity to prove my culinary skills.

Friday 18 June

Another of Nigel's Magical Mystery tours. I really wasn't with it, unfortunately, so I was never quite sure where we were or where we going next. I was soooooo tired. I do recall Tintagel. The town was foul - tacky tourist non-attractions. But the little cove was stunning - blue water and a tiny waterfall that made it feel almost Mediterranean. Walking along the path on the cliffs was also

lovely, as there was a stunning view. Everyone was highly impressed by the tumuli in the church graveyard.

The Rocky Valley was lovely too. Had a deserted feel to it, due to the crumbling old buildings and ancient artistic representations on the cliff walls. I'm not convinced they were that ancient though. Bude hasn't got anything to recommend it really. The beach is big, but kind of grey and unappealing. I was told several times that I was boring because I slept instead of playing rounders with the others. I think I would have collapsed if I tried to run a meter. The thought of running a meter sent me straight to sleep. Woke up to be amused by Nigel, who had built a pebble Rough Tour on his knee to align with Andrew's pebble Stonehenge in the sand.

OK, can't remember what else we did today, or at least, it's a blur, but I can't remember the names where we went today, so that's not very interesting. Realise I should have stayed in the caravan to get some sleep, and risk being called even more boring.

Saturday 19 June

Today's entry is written by Andrew M. on my behalf:

"On the walk in this morning it began to rain. I was with Chris again today. Tanya was put into Richards trench and Andrew was bought in to replace Ken. I spent the morning removing the moor humus layer from around the stones. This continued until after lunch until Mike came over and told us to mattock down to the greasy layer. This evening I have decided to write my diary up. I do like working in Chris's trench and I hope to stay there until the end of the dig".

Sunday 20 June

Back in Chris's trench, where we trowelled down to the moor humus. We were told to be careful, because it was not an even spread. Weird stuff - very black and oily to touch. Also bailed out the water from the bottom of the cut feature in Chris's first trench, so that Cliff could draw the section.

Everyone was very quiet, and I felt uncomfortable all day, trying not to step on the cleaned surface. It drizzled in the morning, then sunny later, but not very warm. The clear day allowed me to appreciate the view. Lovely dinner cooked by Tanya, after stopping quickly at the Rising Sun. A brief diary entry today, but accurate.

Monday 21 June

Back in trench A, house 1 today. Everyone was needed in there to trowel down to the level on which the flagstones rested, so that the surface is even. All the material had to be sieved and I feel like I have half the spoil heap in my eyes. Slight exaggeration. But the high point of the day was when Mike found the first piece of pot. At last, I get to see what the stuff looks like - dirt! The piece was about half a centimeter thick, red on the outside and black in the middle. Yup, like dirt. For all I know, I could have pushed a load through the sieve already! (joke).

Ranjan is always talking about how great the Bowthick walk is to the site, in comparison to Westmoorgate (the way that I come). I am probably biased because I have only done the Bowthick route once, and was on that occasion, concentrating

9

more on going the right way, (as nobody was entirely sure) , than the surroundings, but I thought it was more dull. (I may also have been influenced to draw this conclusion, as the constant uphill walking was a bit of shock to the system).

So, my own opinion is, that the Westmoorgate route is infinitely preferable (and not just because it is shorter). Each morning, when you reach the summit of the first hill and can see Leskernick and the distant horizon for the first time, the light is different. Sometimes the sun is captured in the valley below Brown Willy, illuminating it. Sometimes the light is brighter on Leskernick itself, giving life to the stones. But, most impressively, sometimes the light is patchy, with areas of light and shadow throughout the landscape before you. And, sometimes, of course, the weather is so bloody bad there's no light at all. But that is good too.

Probably the greatest point about this walk is the fact that you can see for a vast distance before you. This in itself has many merits. In arch/anth. terms, it puts the site into context with relation to its surroundings. In my terms, its beautiful. When walking away from the site, you can also see for miles over Cornwall. So far that landscape is flattened.

In contrast to this, I found the Bowithick walk stark, and it seems to cut you off from the surroundings. You seem to be walking at the bottom of a narrow valley and can see nothing. However, it does offer a different method of approaching Leskernick that the inhabitants may have used. Indeed, Leskernick does appear very differently when you first see it from this direction, which is interesting.

Discussion in the evening about the weather. Louise says that she writes a lot about the weather in her diary. I said that I thought this was a bad thing. (I have already discussed my attitude problem regarding the weather). But Jane pounced on my statement, saying that its good to talk about the weather as its one of the main topics of conversation during the day, and it really effects the way that you work on site.

This is certainly true - trowelling in the rain just doesn't work. You also have to spend longer faffing about in the morning trying to find six dry layers of clothing (or in the evening if you are organised, which I was to begin with). But aside from this, the crappy weather is really a wonderful thing. It expands our ability to cope and changes our attitude towards the weather. And if it does begin to get you down, you tell yourself off, as there are people out there with much greater problems. Spending however many hours a day in the rain in the middle of Bodmin Moor, will, I'm sure, do wonders for my stamina and attitude towards such an activity. I have no complaints (yet!).

And, another thing, before I completely bore myself to sleep with my contemplative waffling (I am often contemplative, and often waffle, but I have never combined the two and submitted them to paper - the diary thing is new to me). The variability of the weather does wonders for my aesthetic sensibilities. Each day, in each different weather condition, the surface of "things" changes. Leaves, for example, catch the light differently in the rain, and totally change the appearance of a tree. The stones live and breathe in the mist, but are silent and peaceful in the sun.

In sociological terms (assuming I've got the right concept), it is interesting how the weather effects the group. Or, more accurately, doesn't effect the group. I am grateful to have around me like minded, hardy people, who are, to a seemingly large extent, immune to the common complaints of the rain (as suffered by a lot of individuals out there). Hurrah for everyone's chirpyness and ability to laugh at our situation.

Oh, I do like to end a day on a cheerful note.

Tuesday 22 June

Trench A, house 1. Re-trowelling yesterdays surface. Weather was fair and sunny and overcast (not all at the same time). Aaron slapped my ass with a hand shovel in the trench. Trench etiquette? What is that exactly? Later made him bend over so I could return the favour.

Wednesday 23 June

Trench A, house 1. Trowelling back over yesterdays surface. Sounds familiar. Then we backfilled Richards trench, though, not with him in it. My first stone lifting experience was not too bad, and not just because I went for the smallest stones. It was very boring trowelling and trowelling and trowelling. Its certainly not my greatest skill. I don't think any of this digging stuff is. By 5 o'clock, I was uncomfortable, irritable and tiredness had turned into laziness. I dabbled about looking busy for the last fifteen minutes. Can't get peoples best work out of them when they are tired and unhappy, and that leads to resentment. (As already experienced in Rich's trench).

Thursday 24 June

Mums birthday. Failed to send her a card, but must phone her (prevailing thought of the day).

Got my exam results. Wasn't going to, but curiosity got the better of me. Probably wouldn't have bothered if Katy hadn't asked for hers. Didn't do as badly as I thought, especially considering I finished the Past Societies exam half an hour early because I could only write two essays.

Started the day with a ride with Katy in the back of the van, which was rumoured to be a pretty unpleasant experience. We were chosen to ride in the van by Aaron and Tom/Connor (?) who were in it yesterday. I found out the reason why we were chosen, but I didn't fully understand it. Something to do with a mud wrestling contest and a pot of coleslaw. Go figure. Fairly enjoyable ride. Interesting music coming from the front. Katy, bless her, was very uncomplaining and nice company.

The day consisted of cleaning the section, mattocking and sieving. Hard work. I was knackered by five, and yet again, completely lost the inclination to work, (but fortunately not to live). The weather was very warm and sunny and nice. Some interesting head gear revealed itself (including my attempt to protect myself with my T-shirt). Forgot my hat like an idiot. That's what happens when you tidy up - things get put back in their rightful places and are not at hand when you need them. That's why I don't usually bother with the tidying up thing, but this attitude makes for unhappy caravan mates (infact, it might have done already).

Dinner was cooked by the lads next door (the Andrews, Ken and Patrick). Great evening. Had party trumpets and other things that make annoying noises, so we tooted along to the Beatles. Did a Madonna impression with the party hats. Got wasted. Excellent.

4

Friday 25 June

Another nice Friday, but yet another one where I felt completely knackered and out of it. Went back to Padstow with Patrick and David, and made the most out of the hot day on the beach. Approached the beach along the more traditional beach footpath this time, which was lovely, as there was a different view. Couldn't be bothered to swim. Too tired. I don't particularly like water anyway. Soooooo tired. Still, its better to be tired on a Friday when I can relax. Which I am going to do now.

Saturday 26 June

A good day. Trench morale was high. We did a superb Mexican wave, which had to be done really, as we were all lined up to trowel back from the balk. Told jokes, too. Some were funny. Some were not. The afternoon consisted of back-filling Richards trench (forgot to put Richard in it again - oh catty). The high point of the day for me was when Mike (Pleasure), lost control of the wheel- barrow full of spoil and it fell into the trench, with half the spoil going all over the baulk. How we laughed. No one else saw so we managed to scrape it all up without a trace of the offence left. I tried to imagine Richards face if he had seen the terrible deed. How I would have laughed some more.

When I stopped working, I realised that the saw throat and achy feeling I had woken up with had not disappeared but was very much present. Spent the evening lying in bed, half asleep, and then got an early night.

Sunday 27 June

Woke up feeling extremely hot and achy. Took temperature (I came prepared with one in the knowledge that if there was any flu going around the dig I would get it), and it read 100 degrees C. Tanya told me in that authoritative way that she has, that I would not be going on the hill today. My mum would have agreed, so I stayed in bed. Slept most of the morning with the twatish tweeting of Richard and Judy on faintly in the background, and all afternoon. Woke up at 5pm to wonder where the hell I was. Temp. still 100 degrees. Knocked back some more aspirin

I am impressed that I haven't been ill until this point on the dig (if you don't count my pre, mid and post menstrual tension) This is most unusual for me. Must have what Katya had. Peoples reaction to my flu are intriguing. The girls in my caravan were darlings, and Louise bought me chocolate. As was Andrew, who bought the pubs last packet of Malteesers. (This is why you always let people know that you are a chocoholic when you first meet them). But some people couldn't get the hang of the idea that I feel like shit, and did not actually *do* anything with my day "off", except sleep. I did not particularly enjoy my "break" from the hill because I was asleep the entire time. I did not chose to have flu and would not take time off if I did not need it. Strange.

Anyway, my achy arm is aching, and isn't writing well.

Monday 28 June

See Sunday. For my day was more or less exactly the same. Still feeling crap, as my temperature is now below normal- as is proper when following the normal route to recovery. Feels strange not being on the hill, but there was no way that I could have coped with that today. Felt slightly more with it in the afternoon, so I asked Patrick for his interview in questionnaire form. This would allow me to a) reflect upon the last four weeks with due consideration and b) avoid the risk of falling asleep, posed by normal interview conditions, where the interviewee is expected to be awake. It took me ages. Some of the questions that people asked were, I thought, irrelevant, but it is interesting that they were considered relevant to the people that asked, or were at least, considered. For example, what financial background people come from and their class. Some were more thought provoking and fun to think about, like whether we found the light in Cornwall to be special. Will definitely go on site tomorrow.

Tuesday 29 June

Felt a bit groggy, still. Luckily a relatively easy day. I was put with Gary in the morning, who was lovely. His work involved moving large stones so that he could see the section. I was perfectly happy to help, but the strength of Gareth, Andrew and Chris was preferred. Gary said that I watched on very efficiently though. Willing but not able.

The afternoon was spent back-filling Gary's old trench, under Andrew Loader's very capable instruction. Bar in the evening for a laugh. Then Bed.

Wednesday 30 June

Back-filling/breaking day. Re-turfing is a satisfying job, as it suits my needs for accuracy, intricacy and a perfect image. Bet no-ones said that about re-turfing before! But, after a while Louise pointed out that she had done more than I had. So? Perfection takes time! Maybe my standards should be lowered in the face of time constraints etc. I appreciate that slowness, for whatever reason, is not particularly helpful in an excavation situation. My slowness is something that cropped up in a conversation with Patrick on the walk back. I explained that nothing only takes a minute in "Tess world". He said he'd noticed. How rude.

Crashing on. Also cleaned the grass where the spoil heap was. Relaxing and mindless. Good for me at this stage of the game. Louise found it unbelievable that such an effort went into cleaning grass and was determined that the grass would grow back anyway. Maybe she was right. Maybe she was wrong. Either way, I don't care anymore. I just do what I'm told if I understand why.

Towards the end of the day, we used the spare turfs to re-turf, or improve, the old turf cover of last years trenches around the stone circle. A good laugh. Who'd have thought that there could have been so many innuendoes from carrying turf. Two more days to go. That's if we count Friday, our normal day off. But I don't care if we do have to come up on Friday. I've been here for this long, one more day isn't going to hurt. Though, the fact of the matter is, I might not be any use, because I feel so tired all the time. Am now looking forward to going home, but because I know that I can go home soon. Am very sad to leave such a great group of people, the hill, the landscape and the lifestyle in general.

Thursday 1 July

Turf pile - cleared. Gary's trench - re-turfed. Mikes trench - back-filled. Created two chains of people stretching from trench A, house 1, to the spoil heap. One side swung buckets full of soil towards - or in some cases, the general direction of - the trench, the other side chucking empty buckets back to the spoil heap. It was fun to begin with - I even got to throw buckets at Richards head. (How childish of me). But then I had to move closer to the spoil heap and had to bend down and pick up full buckets. Ouch.

Fun evening. When we got back from stopping at the Rising Sun, the others threw me a Birthday party . Only two weeks early. Tanya baked a cake which was yummy, but Andrew's allergy to milk meant that he scoffed all the icing. The bar closed and lots of us went back to Chris Tilley's caravan for a party. Winner of the Dancing King Award - Professor Chris Tilley. It was nice to see Sharon and Fay relax and have a good time, as they seem to work so hard on site.

Friday 2 July

Cleaning cleaning and more cleaning. Cleaning the stone heap, cleaning the balk and cleaning the spoil heap. Cleaning the balk was actually more interesting than it sounds, as my only companion was Richard, which resulted in some very interesting and revealing conversations. Who, I am pleased to say, I have grown more fond of since I have stopped working for him. He must be one of those people who is nice on a social level, but not a working one. Anyway, he asked me if I thought that he was good supervisor. My answer clearly being no, I had to adopt a more tactful approach. After all, he is learning to, and needs support and constructive criticism.

Hopefully my tactic of talking about the strengths and weaknesses of the other supervisors worked. He admitted that maybe he wasn't made for supervising, as he needs time to think about things, and how to get things across to other people. We agreed that he is good at digging, but lacks the ability to convey the information to the people who are trying to help. He surprised me by telling me that he was glad I was here, on the dig, so that he had someone to talk to. Which was nice, considering I couldn't really help with his Tanya dilemma. Hmmm. A love/ hate relationship.

Really really exhausted now and looking forward to just "sitting" for two hours in the car tomorrow. It's a shame this last week has been so tough for me, because it has made me anxious to get home. If I wasn't ill at the beginning of the week, I would have had more energy and been more lively, but I'm not.

In the evening, I was too knackered and miserable to enjoy the party so I left early and went to bed.

Saturday 3 July

At the very beginning of the dig, I thought this day would never come, as it seemed like I had such a long stretch before me. Now that I'm leaving I am sad, but now very relieved and excited about going home. I need my space again, and time to develop my own projects. I have a huge urge to do something creative, and the dig has inspired in that. I feel very fit, unsurprisingly, and feel like I will remain as active as I have been here, for a long time. But probably won't. I am extremely glad

to have been able to take part in the project. Five weeks of such hard work is good for me, as I know that I will be able to cope with anything now.



Friday 10 June
Relaxing at the pub after a long trek
across Bodmin Moor as part of Nigel's Magical
Mystery Tour.



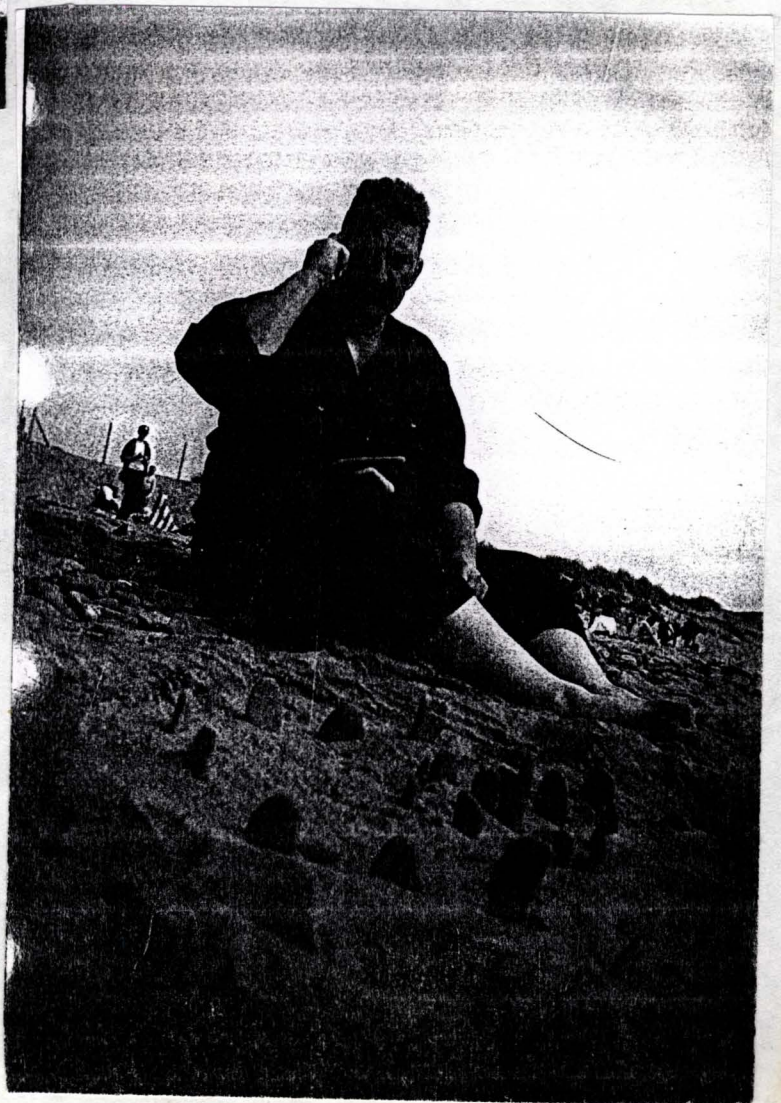
Thursday 17 June
16 people squeezed into our caravan for
a good time.



Friday 18 June. 16
 Nigel's Magical
 Mystery Tor: Part 2.

← The Rodney Valley.

Rough Tor (on Nigel's
 knee) aligned with
 the Stone Circle (in
 the sand).



Thursday 1 July

Chris Tilley's party.

The star of the show
→



← The Andrews reform
their act for a
grateful audience.